

THE EFFECT OF MONOPOLY ON THE NEWS:  
A BEFORE AND AFTER STUDY OF TWO  
CANADIAN ONE NEWSPAPER TOWNS

Katharine Trim, with Gary Pizante  
and James Yaraskavitch  
Carleton University

An analysis of the effect of newspaper industry competition on the news, specifically local government news. A significant decline in the quality and quantity of the news was noted.

Une analyse de l'effect de la compétition de l'industrie du papier journal sur les nouvelles, surtout sur les nouvelles gouvernementales locales. Une diminution sensible de la qualité de nouvelles a été remarquée.

On August 20, 1980, the one newspaper town came to newspaper readers in Ottawa and Winnipeg. With the death of the Ottawa Journal and the Winnipeg Tribune, there were two more names on the list of cities that could be considered monopoly daily newspaper markets. The phenomenon of the monopoly newspaper has produced considerable speculation as to its effect on the quality of news coverage. Just what happens to the news when a newspaper becomes the only paper in town? In English Canada there are now no more than five cities that have competing daily newspapers, and only in Toronto are the papers close enough in terms of circulation that the competition may be viewed as significant (Fletcher, 1981, 2). While the incidence of the one newspaper town is arguably the outcome of the industry's economic en-

vironment and a healthy survival reaction, the health of the news itself may be failing.

In the classic libertarian view, newspapers, and newspaper competition play a fundamental self regulating function for a democratic political system by acting as essential purveyors of a diverse range of competing opinions and ideas. The citizen is free to choose from this wealth of information, ideas and opinions. Thus, "men may exercise reason and choice...crucial elements in the search for truth and in the proper functioning of the democratic polity" (Schramm and Rivers, 1957, 37). And it is not just those industry observers who embrace the libertarian view who have speculated on the possible negative changes to the news that may occur when a newspaper is freed from the restrictions of competition.

The question, along with a concern over the possible implications of the rapid rise of chain ownership, was taken up by the Federal government. Within a week of the Ottawa and Winnipeg newspaper closings the government announced that a Royal Commission would be set up to review the issue. The Commission, chaired by Mr. Thomas Kent, was established by Order-In-Council on 3 September 1980 with a mandate to report its findings by 1 July 1981.

In the Commission's report no recommendations were made to restore competition because of what it called "strong and continuing" economic pressures (Kent Commission, 1981, 228). The one newspaper town was, in the Commission's eyes, a regrettable fact of life that would probably lead to a reduction in editorial expenditures and a poorer quality newspaper.

If the quality is declining what is it that is lost when competition in a newspaper market ceases? A review of the literature reveals many

opinions on the subject but little empirical research that directly addresses this question. Two studies that did compare the entire content of monopoly and competitive newspapers found very few differences. Nixon and Jones (1956, 313) found "no significant differences between competitive and non-competitive dailies in the proportion of advertising space devoted to various categories of news...." Swietzer and Goodman (1975, 710) went so far as to conclude from their study that:

When there is competition between newspapers neither the public nor the news editorial departments of the newspaper seem to behave as if there were competition.

However, Fletcher et. al. (1981, 40) in a study prepared for the Royal Commission, stated that while competition has "somewhat ambiguous effects ... we found clear evidence that competition can have measurable positive effects." The study cites examples from Edmonton and Quebec City where the infusion of competition forced the older dailies to devote more coverage to local and regional news.

In another report prepared for the Commission, Walter Stewart interviewed journalists responsible for the local beat at the Winnipeg Free Press and the Ottawa Citizen, both of which no longer face significant competition. The comments of these reporters are quite revealing, as they point out the different approach to their job following the transition to a monopoly environment. One reporter said that:

Before you were always worrying about the other guy. You would be at a meeting where not a lot happened, and you would see the "Trib" guy dash for a phone at the end. You'd say to yourself, "What

the hell is he so excited about?" so you'd wind up filing a story just to cover your ass, not because it was really worth putting in the paper. All that is gone. Now you do the stories that matter, and you have a little time to think about what should be covered and what can be left out (Stewart, 1981, 12).

When asked the same question, a local reporter for the *Ottawa Citizen* replied similarly:

I don't have to rush into print because somebody from the *Journal* may be working on the same thing...I used to file up to half-dozen stories a day,...is the reader being shortchanged because I'm not filing so many stories...I don't think so. I'm doing fewer stories, but I'm doing them better. For a person on a beat, I think the change has to be seen as mostly good (Stewart, 1981, 86).

From this, it would seem that the gathering of local news changes in a non-competitive environment, although, unlike the Royal Commission, at least two reporters believe the change is for the better.

## THE STUDY

An ideal opportunity to assess empirically the effect of competition on newspaper performance was provided by the simultaneous closures of the *Winnipeg Tribune* and the *Ottawa Journal*, owned by the Southam and Thompson newspaper chains respectively. In Ottawa the *Journal* was a major morning daily that was making an expensive and high profile effort to compete with the other major afternoon daily, the *Citizen* (owned by Southam). In Winnipeg, the *Tribune* was competing with its rival daily the *Free Press* (owned by F. P. Publications

until the Thompson Group took over in early 1980). Not only were the **Tribune** and the **Free Press** competing in terms of format, they were both competing for the afternoon market. The **Winnipeg Sun**, first published in November 1981, was not considered to be significant competition for the **Winnipeg Free Press** due to the size of its circulation at the time of this research. The December 1981 **Matthew's List** listed the **Sun's** circulation as 41,427 while the **Free Press's** circulation stood at 187,522.

The term 'competition' as it is used in the preceding paragraph refers to a situation whereby the two newspapers compete for advertising revenues and market penetration. Although the presence of this type of competition was critical, the study went further to analyze one area of 'head-to-head' competition. This will occur at the newsgathering stage where two or more newswriters from different news organizations compete for the same story from the same source. A situation where reporters from the papers in question go head-to-head for the news was considered the most likely news area to uncover possible differences in coverage. Other areas of newswriting that rely on wireservice copy or an editorial board might also change over time, but it would be most difficult to attribute the cause to competition as the changes occur within the institution itself.

Few areas of head-to-head competition remain in the newspaper industry and, of those that do, most are local in orientation. Municipal government related stories were selected as the case for the study because they represent a level of political decision making for which people need information to make intelligent political decisions. Any change in coverage is significant in that it reflects both the voting public's ability to make a democratic decision and a newspaper's commitment to providing information to the public at the

municipal level. Municipal government related news was operationalized as news generated from either the Ottawa or Winnipeg city councils and the boards, committees, administrative departments and other institutions that report to city council. In Ottawa, this excluded school boards, regional government, public transport and the surrounding city councils. In Winnipeg this excluded the community councils, the school boards and public transport. In both cases news about the fire departments, police departments and the libraries were considered only if the story discussed administrative or budgetary concerns. The unit of analysis or a 'case' was a single story that met the operational criterion. The study period before the closures of the **Journal** and **Tribune** went from July 1 to December 31, 1979, while the study period after the closures went from July 1 to December 31, 1981. The combination of the two different sampling periods and the four different papers produced six situations: the **Journal**, the **Tribune**, the **Free Press** before, the **Free Press** after, the **Citizen** before, and the **Citizen** after. Within each of the two sampling periods a random 20% of issues was analyzed for each of the publishing newspapers.

A total of 180 newspaper issues was sampled. From this sample 537 City Hall stories were analyzed. Comparisons between the papers and time periods were made according to (1) **presentation**, the size and placement of the story, and (2) the governmental institutions or bureaucratic structures to which **references** were made. The **central figure**, that is, the featured institution or chief actor in each news story was also recorded. Each of the major variables is hereafter referred to by the bold face diminutive. It should be mentioned that there were no outstanding events that might have made City Hall more newsworthy in one period than in the other.

In general, the results are evaluated in terms of the quality of the news before and after competition existed. However, rather than define quality as the subjective concepts of better or worse, the discussion is more worthwhile if it is centered on the question of comprehensiveness. Is the news as comprehensive in terms of reporting on the full range of City Hall activities in a monopoly situation as it was in a competitive environment?

## RESULTS

At the outset, it should be noted that in every newspaper studied City Hall news received little attention. Over 96% of all the stories were less than one quarter of a page in length and 67% of the stories coded were less than one eighth of a page. The majority of these stories concerned decisions, statements, or reports generated from municipal meetings and forums. From all papers within both competitive and monopoly situations there were very few special features, editorials, or columns concerning any group, committee, or person working within City Hall. Furthermore, most of the City Hall news was confined to the 'local' section; very rarely did it find its way to the front page. Therefore, to assess the effects of competition, the analysis must concentrate on the differences that may occur within the parameters of the traditions of City Hall news.

With this in mind, the areas where change, if it does indeed occur, would be expected is in the frequency, quantity and style of coverage as well as in the calculations of the total news hole. Change would also be expected in the institutions that are the sources of news. In particular, attention is focused on the lower-tier decision making aspects of City Hall activity. For the purposes of this paper, Ottawa or Winnipeg City Councils represent the upper tier and reporting

municipal institutions, such as civic boards and commissions, committees and administrative departments, form the lower tier. These institutions are less active but still make important decisions affecting day-to-day life. Considering the statements of the journalists cited previously it would not be surprising to find that these institutions suffer the most in the transition from a competitive to a monopoly situation.

Table One represents the changes in the quantity of municipal news by situation. The most significant change occurred in the **Winnipeg Free Press**. In the 1979 sampling period 141 stories were published while in the 1981 period there were only 47 stories. Furthermore, in 1979 only one in five issues analyzed contained no stories while in 1981 half of the papers failed to report on City Hall. There was an average of nearly 5 stories per day in 1979 and less than 2 in 1981. Clearly the quantity of City Hall news decreased.

In terms of the size of the articles published in the **Free Press** there is a definite reduction in the quantity of newspace. Whereas in 1979 the largest stories fell in the quarter to a half page range, in 1981 no stories fell within this range and the number of papers with no stories rose substantially. What can be said, then, is that those stories that warranted a high amount of news space in 1979 were getting less space in 1981 and those stories that were getting a lower amount in 1979 were not getting published in 1981.

The **Tribune** published an average of almost four stories a day in the sample period. Compared to the **Free Press**, it had about the same proportion of stories less than an eighth of a page and 6% of the papers did not contain any City Hall news. These facts, coupled with the researcher's opinion that the **Tribune's** urban affairs reporting was as timely and complete as the coverage in the



Table One

Quantity by Newspaper

Newspaper	Issues with no municipal news N	1 page or over N %		1/2 to 1 page N %		1/4 to 1/2 pg. N %		1/8 to 1/4 pg. N %		less than 1/8 page N %		Total N %	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Tribune</b>	2	-	-	1	1	1	1	28	25	81	73	111	21
<b>Free Press Before</b>	6	-	-	-	-	6	4	36	25	99	70	141	26
<b>Free Press After</b>	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	28	34	72	47	9
<b>Journal</b>	7	-	-	-	-	2	3	24	40	63	57	60	11
<b>Citizen Before</b>	4	-	-	-	-	5	5	31	31	63	64	99	18
<b>Citizen After</b>	6	2	3	-	-	-	-	25	32	52	66	79	15
<b>Total</b>	39	2	1	1	1	14	3	157	29	363	68	537	

**Free Press**, points to the existence of a strong competitive environment for newsgathering in Winnipeg during the 1979 period.

Calculations of the news hole in the Winnipeg news market produced some startling results. In the **Free Press** alone the news hole dropped to 30% of its former size. The total news hole reduction, or decrease in the news available to the public, stood at 82%. Simply put, there was only 18% of the 1979 volume of news available in 1981.

For Ottawa the results are less dramatic although the same trends are apparent. For the 1979 period the **Citizen** published 99 stories and 4 in 30 issues sampled contained no municipal news. In 1981, 79 stories appeared and one in every five issues had no stories.

The **Ottawa Journal** published 60 stories in the sample period and of those 58 were less than a quarter of a page. The **Journal** was not felt to offer the **Citizen** the same level of head-on competition as the **Tribune** did the **Free Press** because it did not concentrate its reporting on local news.

Computations of the news hole show a 20% drop in municipal news in the **Citizen** alone. In total, the **Ottawa City Hall** news hole reduced by 60%.

Table Two compares the newspaper situation with selected central figures. Data for both cities, in most cases, show a drop in the raw number totals. In light of the news hole decreases noted earlier, this is not surprising. As this is the case the analysis concentrates on the percentages given and not on raw numbers to discover any further significant trends in the data.

What is readily apparent is the substantial changes in the data pertaining to Winnipeg. For

Table Two  
Selected Central Figures in News Stories

Central Figure	Tribune		Free Press Before		Free Press After		Journal		Citizen Before		Citizen After		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Politicians	26	23	11	8	4	9	5	8	8	8	6	8	60
City Council	15	13	14	10	14	30	19	32	17	18	22	28	100
City Hall	1	1	10	7	3	6	10	18	6	6	3	4	33
Committees-Ott	--	--	--	--	--	--	17	28	41	41	23	29	81
Finance Comm-Wpg	2	2	9	6	8	17	--	--	--	--	--	--	19
Works & Op Comm-Wpg	8	7	22	16	0	0	--	--	--	--	--	--	30
Works & Op Dept-Wpg	9	8	9	6	0	0	--	--	--	--	--	--	18
Depts.	7	6	11	8	2	4	3	5	5	5	7	9	35
Civic Bds & Comm's	7	6	15	10	2	4	0	0	3	3	4	5	31
Special Int Gps	8	8	6	3	0	0	3	5	6	6	5	6	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>		<b>107</b>		<b>33</b>		<b>57</b>		<b>86</b>		<b>70</b>		<b>435</b>

Winnipeg newspaper readers there is the loss of the central figure used most often by the **Tribune**. In 1979, one quarter of the **Tribune** stories had specific elected officials as the central figure. In 1981 less than one-tenth of the 47 **Free Press** stories used these elected officials as the central figure of the news item. The differences are even greater when the 1981 sample of the **Free Press** is compared to the data obtained from the same paper in 1979.

In 1979 the **Free Press** used City Council as the central figure in 10% of sampled stories. In 1981, the Council was the central figure 30% of the time. Also, the Finance Committee was coded as central figure 6% of the time for the 1979 period. In 1981 it took that position 17% of the time. These increases occurred at the expense of the lower-tier institutions; chiefly, the Works and Operations Committee. In 1979, the Works and Operations Committee was the central figure for 15% of the **Free Press** stories; yet, in 1981 there were no stories in which the committee took that position. As well, the Works and Operations department was the central figure 6% of the time in 1979, but in 1981 there were, again, no stories in which it took the position of central figure. Decreases were also recorded for other lower-tier institutions, such as administrative departments and civic boards. Therefore, it is not just that there were fewer stories concerning municipal government in the **Free Press** in 1981. Those stories that did appear in the paper in 1981 were less specific than their counterparts in 1979, that is, about council in general and not the committee concerned. Also noted was a tendency to report on the more obvious news sources of the City Council or the Finance Committee.

The situation in Ottawa differs slightly. The **Journal** tended to use the vague notion of "City Hall" or "City Council" (for example, "City

Hall decided today....") more often than the Citizen. Thus, unlike the Tribune, the Journal did not focus on a specific set of politicians or institutions more often than its competitor. The Citizen's use of most civic boards and departments as a central figure remained about the same. However, much like the Free Press, the Citizen shifted to less specific central figures to the detriment of municipal committees. In 1979, 17% of the stories reported on Council while 41% reported on committee activity. In 1981, 28% of the stories reported on council and only 29% of reported on committees.

Tables Three to Six give an indication of the emphases given to selected institutions in municipal government in each of the newspapers. The tables are a compilation of data found on the first four possible reference variables for any case. The measure of emphasis or presentation is itself a computation of a particular case's attributes: for example, headline size, location in the newspaper and news space size. Presentation is divided into quintile divisions ranging from high presentation emphasis to low presentation emphasis. In all the tables generated to compare the presentation of institutions in both non-competitive and competitive environments some drop-off was noticed. Three of the more conspicuous examples are shown in the tables below.

Table Three describes the presentation given to those stories that mention outside civic board and commissions such as a hospital board or police commission, by each newspaper situation. In the Free Press, civic boards were mentioned 34 times in 1979, and only one third as many times in 1981. Of these stories in 1979, 21 were in the top three quintiles of presentation (62%) and in 1981 seven (58%) were in the top three quintiles. Thus, there is evidence that the profile of civic boards diminished over this two year period, especially

Table Three

## Presentation of News Stories

Newspaper	High N	20% %	2nd N	20% %	3rd N	20% %	4th N	20% %	Low N	20% %	Total
<b>Tribune</b>	2	9	5	23	7	32	2	9	6	27	22
<b>Free Press Before</b>	--	--	12	35	9	27	12	35	1	3	34
<b>Free Press After</b>	--	--	2	17	5	42	5	42	--	--	12
<b>Journal</b>	7	50	--	--	4	29	2	14	1	7	14
<b>Citizen Before</b>	1	3	4	14	8	28	7	24	9	31	29
<b>Citizen After</b>	--	--	2	33	3	50	1	17	--	--	6
<b>Total</b>	10		25		36		29		17		117

(controlling for: Outside civic boards and commissions)

if the numbers from the Tribune are added to the 1979 figure. The Citizen referred to civic boards 29 times in 1979, but only 6 times in 1981, although five of the 1981 stories were in the top three quintiles of presentation. There also appears to be a diminishing prominence given to civic boards in the Citizen.

These findings provide an interesting comparison to Table Four that describes the emphasis given to those stories that mention City Council. Although the Free Press published almost one hundred fewer stories in 1981, City Council was referred to with about the same frequency. In 1979, six (33%) of the stories were in the upper three levels of presentation, and only two (12%) in 1981 were given the same emphasis. In the case of the Citizen, the frequency of Council references increased, although the paper published once again, fewer stories. The number of stories in the top three quintiles of presentation also decreased.

Finally, Tables Five and Six concern Winnipeg's Works and Operations Committee and the Works and Operations Department, respectively. Again it is clear that the profiles of these institutions have been drastically reduced since the Tribune closed down.

These results are in keeping with the trends found in Table Two. While less specific sources of news increased in the 1981 sample, lower-tier institutions received less coverage both in terms of style of presentation and quantity.

Table Seven presents the total number of references to selected municipal government institutions for each newspaper in 1979 and 1981, excluding the data for the central figure. The most an institution or elected official could be coded as a reference in a case is once.

Table Four

Presentation of News Stories  
Controlling for City Council References

Newspaper	Low 20% N %	2nd 20% N %	3rd 20% N %	4th 20% N %	High 20% N %	Total
Tribune	-- --	3 30	2 20	2 20	3 30	10
Free Press Before	-- --	5 28	1 6	11 61	1 6	18
Free Press After	-- --	-- --	2 13	11 69	3 19	16
Journal	2 18	2 18	1 9	4 36	2 18	11
Citizen Before	-- --	3 17	9 50	5 28	1 6	18
Citizen After	1 4	3 13	4 17	12 52	3 13	23
Total	3	16	19	45	13	96

(controlling for: City Council)



# Table Five

## Presentation of News Stories Controlling for Winnipeg Works and Operations Committee

Newspaper	Low N	20% %	2nd N	20% %	3rd N	20% %	4th N	20% %	High N	20% %	Total
<b>Tribune</b>	1	8	2	17	4	33	3	25	2	17	12
<b>Free Press Before</b>	--	--	2	25	1	13	4	50	1	13	8
<b>Free Press After</b>	--	--	--	--	1	50	--	--	1	50	2
<b>Total</b>	1		4		6		7		4		22

(Controlling for: Winnipeg Words and Operations Committee)

Table Six

Presentation of News Stories  
Controlling for Winnipeg Department of  
Works and Operations

Newspaper	Low N	20% %	2nd N	20% %	3rd N	20% %	4th N	20% %	High N	20% %	Total
<b>Tribune</b>	4	17	7	29	5	21	1	4	7	29	24
<b>Free Press Before</b>	2	13	2	13	2	13	8	50	2	13	16
<b>Free Press After</b>	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	0
<b>Total</b>	6		9		7		9		9		40

(Controlling for: Winnipeg Department of Works and Operations)

Once more, the trends found in Tables One to Six reappear in Table Seven. For all but three of the possible references the gross numbers of 1981 references fell significantly below the 1979 level in the surviving paper. The three institutions that rose numerically were the Winnipeg Finance Committee, Ottawa general business interests and Ottawa City Council references. This rise occurred in spite of an overall decrease in the 1981 totals of references. The largest proportionate increases occurred in these same institutions, the Winnipeg City Council and Winnipeg general business interests.

Similar to the results from Tables Two to Six, the largest numerical and proportionate decreases occurred in the references to lower-tier decision making bodies, including the Winnipeg Works and Operations Committee and department, Ottawa's Planning Board, administrative departments and civic boards and commissions. In all, Table Seven indicates a definite reduction in the amount of detail found in the news. In 1981 both the **Free Press** and the **Citizen** concentrated their resources on the more obvious, higher profile sources of news.

Finally, Table Seven confirms the less competitive nature of the 1979 Ottawa newspaper market in terms of municipal news. Although the **Journal** referred to Council committees far more often than did the competition, overall the figures for the **Journal** were lower or on par with those from the **Citizen**. The situation is reversed in Winnipeg where the **Tribune's** emphasis on politicians, the Works and Operations Committee and the Works and Operations Department, was a specific area of coverage concentration that has not been taken up by the **Free Press** in 1981.

**Table Seven**  
**Selected References Found In News Stories**

Reference	Tribune		Free Press Before		Free Press After		Journal		Citizen Before		Citizen After		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Politicians	131	23	147	18	48	18	49	14	98	17	82	20	555
City Council	15	3	23	3	20	8	14	4	29	5	32	8	133
Planning Board-Ott	--	--	--	--	--	--	15	4	12	2	5	1	32
Committees	22	4	26	3	15	6	31	9	17	3	12	3	123
Finance Comm. Winnipeg	8	1	4	1	10	4	--	--	--	--	--	--	22
Works & Op. Comm.-Wpg	12	2	11	1	2	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	25
Works & Op. Dept-Wpg	30	5	26	3	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	56
Departments	16	3	41	5	14	5	19	6	56	10	27	6	173
Civic Boards & Comm's	28	5	50	6	19	7	25	7	43	8	10	2	175
Special Interest Gps	31	5	51	6	14	5	31	9	57	10	29	7	21
General Business Interests	30	5	71	9	33	12	16	5	26	5	35	8	211
<b>Total</b>	322		450		175		200		338		232		1718

## DISCUSSION

It is clear that there is an overall decline in the quantity and quality of municipal government news in both the surviving newspapers. Furthermore, those stories that received a high amount of news space in 1979 were getting less space in 1981 and those stories that received small space in 1979 were not getting published in 1981. The decline in the Free Press was more dramatic as the combined (Tribune and Free Press) news hole dropped to 18% of its former size. In the Free Press alone the news hole dropped to 30% of the former size. The Citizen showed a drop in its newshole of 20% while the combined (Citizen and Journal) news hole dropped by about 60%.

The second major trend was a shift in emphasis to more obvious or higher profile sources of news at the expense of the lower-tier decision making institutions. The most striking finding in this area was the near exclusion of both the Winnipeg Works and Operations Committee and Department, the largest administrative department in terms of the budget, from the 1981 sample. This is significant considering that Works and Operation stories were referred to in about 10% of the news sampled in 1979. Finally the analysis uncovered strong competition for municipal news between the Winnipeg Free Press and the Tribune. Both papers considered City Hall an important source of news. The same cannot be said of the Journal. The Citizen's coverage of municipal affairs was far more in-depth and frequent.

This difference in the level of competition may, in fact, account for the considerable differences in the results for Ottawa and Winnipeg. While the quality of coverage declined in both cities, in every instance this decline was more dramatic in Winnipeg. As has already been demonstrated, in Winnipeg the competition was much

stronger. Therefore, for a Free Press reporter the **Tribune** was a more serious threat than a **Journal** reporter to a newsworker from the **Citizen**. It would follow that, when competition ceases, there is a greater likelihood that a Free Press newsworker would notice the change and react more demonstratively than a newsworker from the **Citizen**.

Another possible explanation for the difference in coverage is the relationship of the owners to their news product. The difference between the two cities might well be attributed to a particular owner's attempts to cut back on production expenditures once freed from the constraints of competition. Since the Free Press experienced a change in ownership in 1980, the variations in the 1979 and 1981 sampling periods might, in part, be accounted for by this ownership change.

Whatever the reason for the difference, in both cases the news became less comprehensive and dropped significantly in frequency after the closures of the **Tribune** and the **Journal**. The findings indicate a decline in the amount and quality of information available to the public on municipal government and civic officials. When one considers that the newspaper is the major source of in-depth information on local government, a conclusion to be drawn is that with the death of newspaper competition it is harder for the electorate to make informed decisions on a local politician's performance, or on the legitimacy of City Hall activity.

#### FOOTNOTES

The authors would like to acknowledge the contribution of Dr. Jay Weston, Carleton University.

## REFERENCES

Canada. **Royal Commission on Newspapers.** Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1981.

Fletcher, Frederick. **The Newspaper and Public Affairs.** Report to the Royal Commission on Newspapers. Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1981.

Nixon, Raymond B. and Robert L. Jones. The Content of Non Competitive versus Competitive Newspapers, **Journalism Quarterly**, 1956, 33, 299 - 314.

Schramm, Wilbur and William Rivers. **Responsibility in Mass Communications.** New York: Harper and Row, 1957.

Stewart, Walter. **The Only Side of the Street, The Journalists.** Report to the Royal Commission on Newspapers. Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1981.

Swietzer, John and Elaine Goodman. Does Newspaper Competition Make A Difference to Readers?, **Journalism Quarterly**, 1975, 55, 706 - 710.

Katharine Trim (B.A. Carleton University, 1982) is a researcher, Statistics Canada, Ottawa. Her research interests are in the effectiveness and the effect of advertising, new trends in marketing, market research, and survey techniques and design.

Gary Pizante [B.A. (Hons.) Carleton University, 1982] is a graduate student in Communications Policy at the University of Colorado. His research interests are in Communications Policy, especially broadcast regulation and content legislation.

James Yaraskavitch [B. A. (Hons.) Carleton University, 1982] is a researcher, Labour Canada, Ottawa. His research interests are in labour economics and trade union development.